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ABSTRACT

Next to the family, the school has the most significant impact on children's growth and development. The School Development Program (SDP), a school-reform initiative, was designed by Dr. James Comer to provide students with a nurturing, challenging, and supportive school environment. The process emphasizes mutual respect and collaboration among and between parents and school staff in creating a positive school climate and developing effective school- and classroom-level activities that support and nurture all children along multiple pathways. This book tells the story of the SDP, chronicling its history and explicating its philosophy, principles, operations, and mechanisms. Chapter 1 outlines the chronological development of the program and describes its major components. Chapter 2 explains the theoretical framework that undergirds the program and shows how Comer's child-development and educational perspective is applied through the program. The third chapter highlights the role of parents, school staff, and community members in helping children develop well. The partnership between Southern University at New Orleans and the New Orleans Public School system to implement the SDP is described in the fourth chapter. Chapter 5 articulates a methodology for improving student achievement at the classroom level, and chapter 6 discusses the research and evaluation framework, process, and findings. Insights gained from implementation of the program over its 28-year history are presented in the final chapter. The data demonstrate that schools will not be able to do their share unless fundamental changes occur in the social and economic context of family and child life in America. An index, sample worksheets, 18 figures, and 7 tables are included. References accompany each chapter. (LMI)